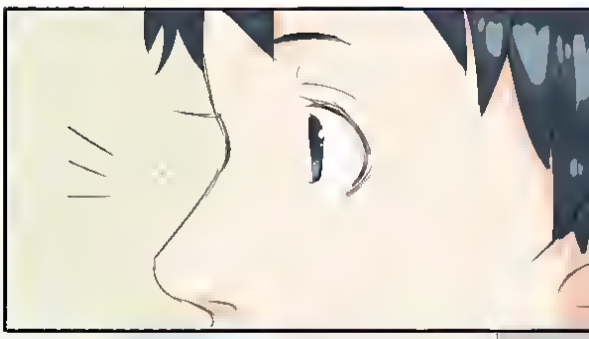


...
AH!

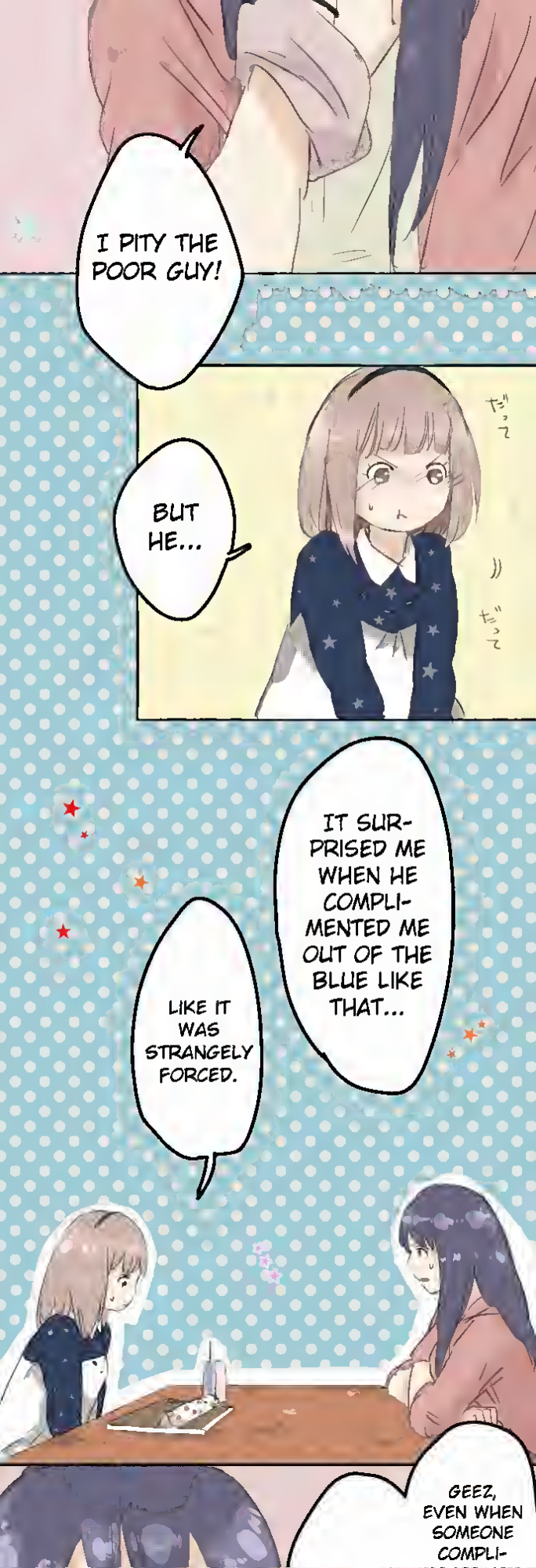
IGARASHI -KUN!
H-HEY!
...
CHIYO -CHAN

THOSE CLOTHES SUIT YOU REALLY WELL!
AND IT'S A CUTE LOOK!
Good!
HAH!?
IGA-RASHI, STOP WITH THE FAKE COMPLI-MENTS!
...
ER, I MEAN, SUDDENLY SHOWERING ME WITH COMPLI-MENTS... I-IT FEELS WEIRD.
HUH

BUT AREN'T I COMPLI-MENTING YOU...?
ANYWAY, WHAT ARE YOU HERE FOR?
...
OH... I DIDN'T COME FOR ANYTHING IN PARTICU-LAR.

こいいぬ。

第7話　星空の下


I PITY THE POOR GUY!
BUT HE...
だって
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IT SURPRISED ME WHEN HE COMPLIMENTED ME OUT OF THE BLUE LIKE THAT...
LIKE IT WAS STRANGELY FORCED.
GEEZ, EVEN WHEN SOMEONE COMPLI-

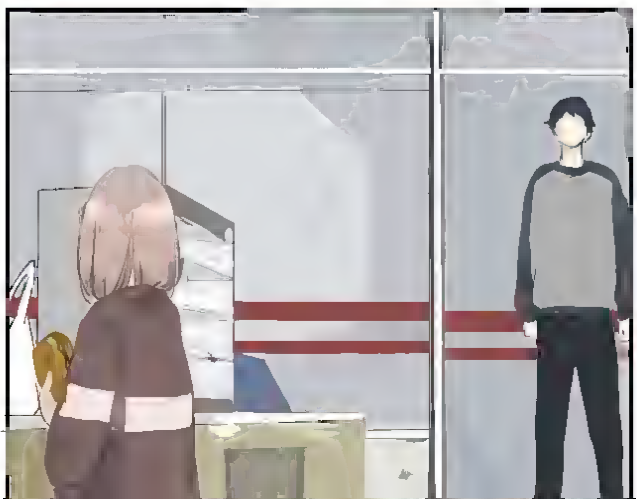
YOU STILL MANAGE TO GET MAD AT THEM. YOU'RE HOPELESS.
MENTS YOU.
THOUGH I AGREE WITH YOU ON HOW SUPERFICIAL HE SOUNDED, IT WASN'T WORTH GETTING MAD AT.
I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S JUST YOU BEING STUBBORN OR WHAT... BUT IT SEEMS LIKE YOU STILL HAVEN'T FORGIVEN HIM YET.
AND YOU'RE RELUCTANT TO FORGIVING HIM BECAUSE THAT MEANS LOSING YOUR PRIDE. AM I RIGHT?
I'M NOT REALLY AN EXPERT ON

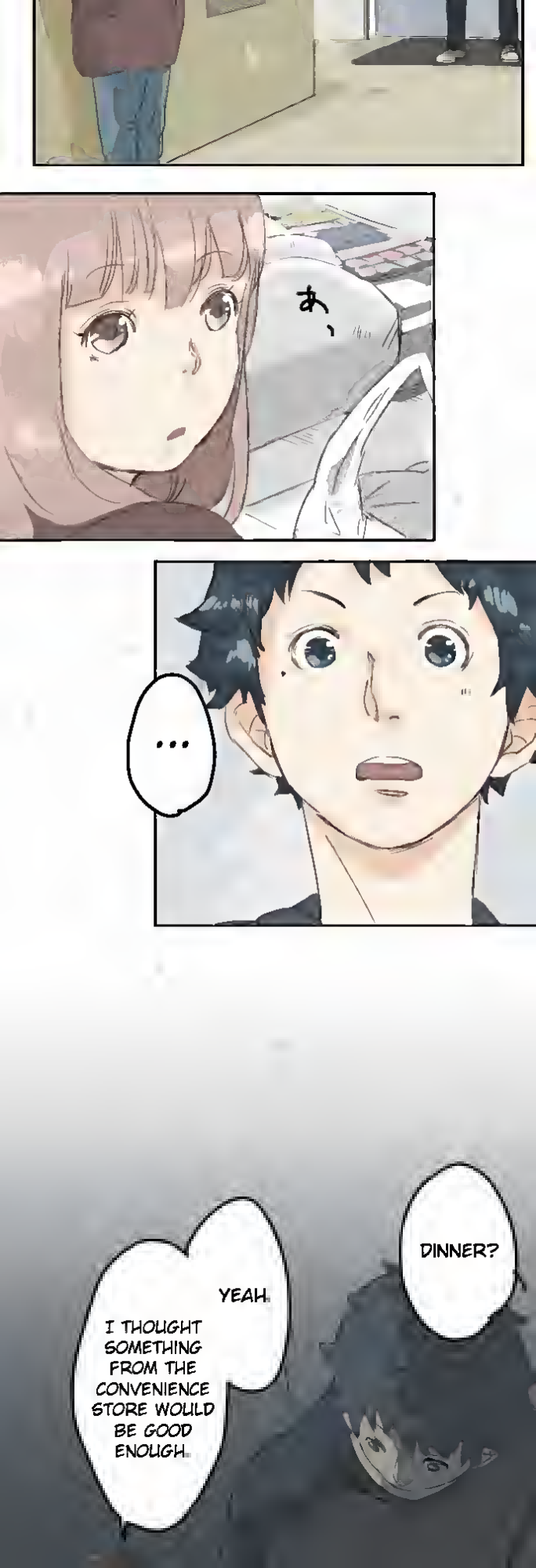
IT'S HARD TO SPEAK FACE-TO-FACE AND MANAGE TO STILL BE COMPLETELY HONEST AND GENUINE.
THESE THINGS, BUT WHEN YOUR HEART'S POUNDING AND YOUR NERVES ARE ACTING UP,
DESPITE THAT, HE...
ATTEMPTED TO TRAVERSE THE BOUND-ARY YOU DREW, PAYING NO HEED TO EVERYTHING ELSE.
SOMEONE WITH THAT KIND OF MENTAL STRENGTH CAN'T POSSI-BLY EXIST.
HE'S SO PURE! ALMOST LIKE A PUPPY!

INSTEAD OF LOCKING YOUR HEART UP, HOW ABOUT PRYING IT OPEN FOR HIM?
YOU'VE FINALLY REUNITED, WHAT'S WRONG WITH HAVING A PROPER CONVERSATION WITH HIM?
I GUESS ...
YOU HAVE A POINT.

convenience store 24
?

WEL-
COME!

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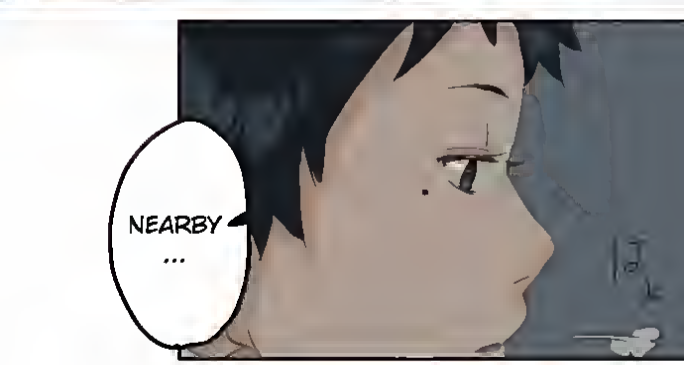
...
DINNER?
YEAH.
I THOUGHT SOMETHING FROM THE CONVENIENCE STORE WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH.

IT'S KINDA HARD TO TALK WHILE STANDING LIKE THIS...


NEARBY ...

NEARBY THERE'S A PARK.
I HAVE SOMETHING THAT I WANT TO TALK ABOUT.
IS THAT ALRIGHT?

WOW--THE STARS REALLY ARE BEAUTIFUL OUT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.
THE SKY IS CLEAR, THIS BENTO TASTES GREAT.

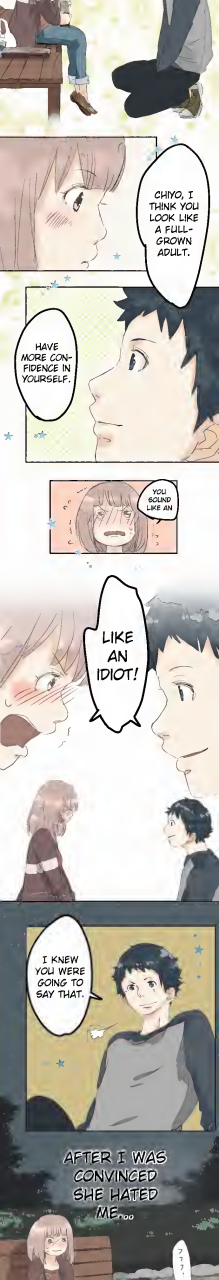
AH
THAT'S RIGHT.
?

I BOUGHT TWO MEAT BUNS. IF YOU WANT, YOU CAN HAVE ONE.
T... THANKS...
WHEN WE FIRST REUNITED, WE WERE TALKING TO EACH OTHER LIKE WE ARE NOW.
OH YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
I... WAS SURPRISED.
ALL OF A SUDDEN, THIS RANDOM BOY I DIDN'T KNOW WAS CHASING ME.

A RIDICULOUSLY TALL ONE, TOO. IT HAPPENED WAY TOO FAST I HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS GOING ON.
I SEE WHERE SHE'S COMING FROM NOW...!
HOW TALL ARE YOU?
184 CM, I GUESS.
THAT'S HUGE!
SCARY!
I'VE HARDLY CHANGED AFTER ALL THIS TIME.
I WISH YOU'D SHARE SOME OF THAT TALL-NESS WITH ME.
I DON'T LIKE BEING THE ONLY ONE WHO STILL LOOKS LIKE A KID.
IN MY MIND, IT SEEMED LIKE YOU WERE MAKING A FOOL OF ME THAT TIME.
I DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE TO YOU IN TERMS OF HEIGHT.
NOT EXACTLY THE TRUTH BUT...
SORRY FOR BEING COLD TO YOU.

NOT AT ALL!
I CAN PUT UP WITH IT EVERY TIME IT HAPPENS.
IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL WHAT KIND OF HORRIBLE THINGS YOU SAY TO ME, BECAUSE I'M IMMUNE.
I'M PERFECTLY FINE.
BECAUSE YOU HATED LOSING, HUH...
SO YOU HAVE A COMPLEX OVER YOUR HEIGHT, NOW?
I NEVER INTENDED TO MAKE A FOOL OF YOU.
AH
I HAVE AN IDEA!
?
I GOT IT, I GOT IT

LOOK.
I'M BACK TO BEING A KID AGAIN!
IT'S IGARASHI THE 8 YEAR-OLD!

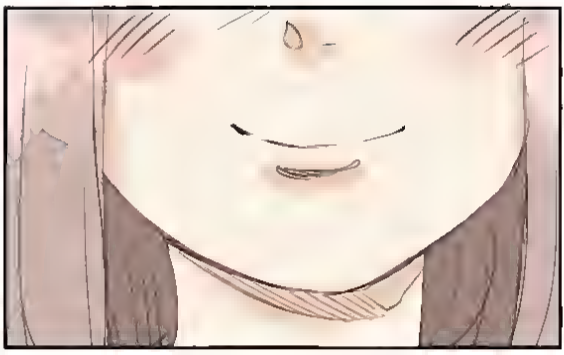

CHIYO, I THINK YOU LOOK LIKE A FULL-GROWN ADULT.
HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE IN YOURSELF.
YOU SOUND LIKE AN
LIKE AN IDIOT!
I KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO SAY THAT.
AFTER I WAS CONVINCED SHE HATED ME...
...

I FINALLY REALIZED THAT THAT WASN'T THE CASE AT ALL
RELIEVED, I START-ED TO LAUGH.
あはは
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

AFTER HAVING NOT SEEN HER FOR TEN YEARS, THIS TINY LITTLE WOMAN HAS BEEN ABLE TO FLUSTER ME A GOOD AMOUNT.

BUT... THE 8 YEAR-OLD CHIYO AND THE CHIYO NOW BOTH HAVE, IN MY MIND, A HUGE PRESENCE.

IT'S JUST THAT SHE HASN'T REALIZED IT YET.



to be continued...

THE CAROLUS MENGUS TRANSLATION GROUP

tl/ts
cleaner